

LOUIS XIV

1638-1715



He became King at age 4 but did not rule until he was
23



Normally, Kings
appointed Prime
Ministers to run the
country. Louis decided
he would rule the
country himself.

He was a firm believer in the the DIVINE RIGHT OF
KINGS He was a CATHOLIC and supported JAMES II
in England

Most Kings in France had
problems with the Nobility
trying to challenge the
kings power

Louis had an idea on how
to change that



Normally, most important positions in government were bought by Nobles. This was one way for the King to raise money. Nobles generally controlled the government

Louis appointed skilled middle class people to government, and earned their loyalty. Nobles influence was diminished



Without government jobs, Nobles depended on the King's generosity for income



Louis kept the Nobles dependent on him by only giving money to those who were totally loyal to him and served him at the palace

He was called the Sun King because he saw himself as the
centre of the France

”L’Etat C’est Moi” “I am the Country”.

Court life in France revolved around worshipping of Louis and
everything he did

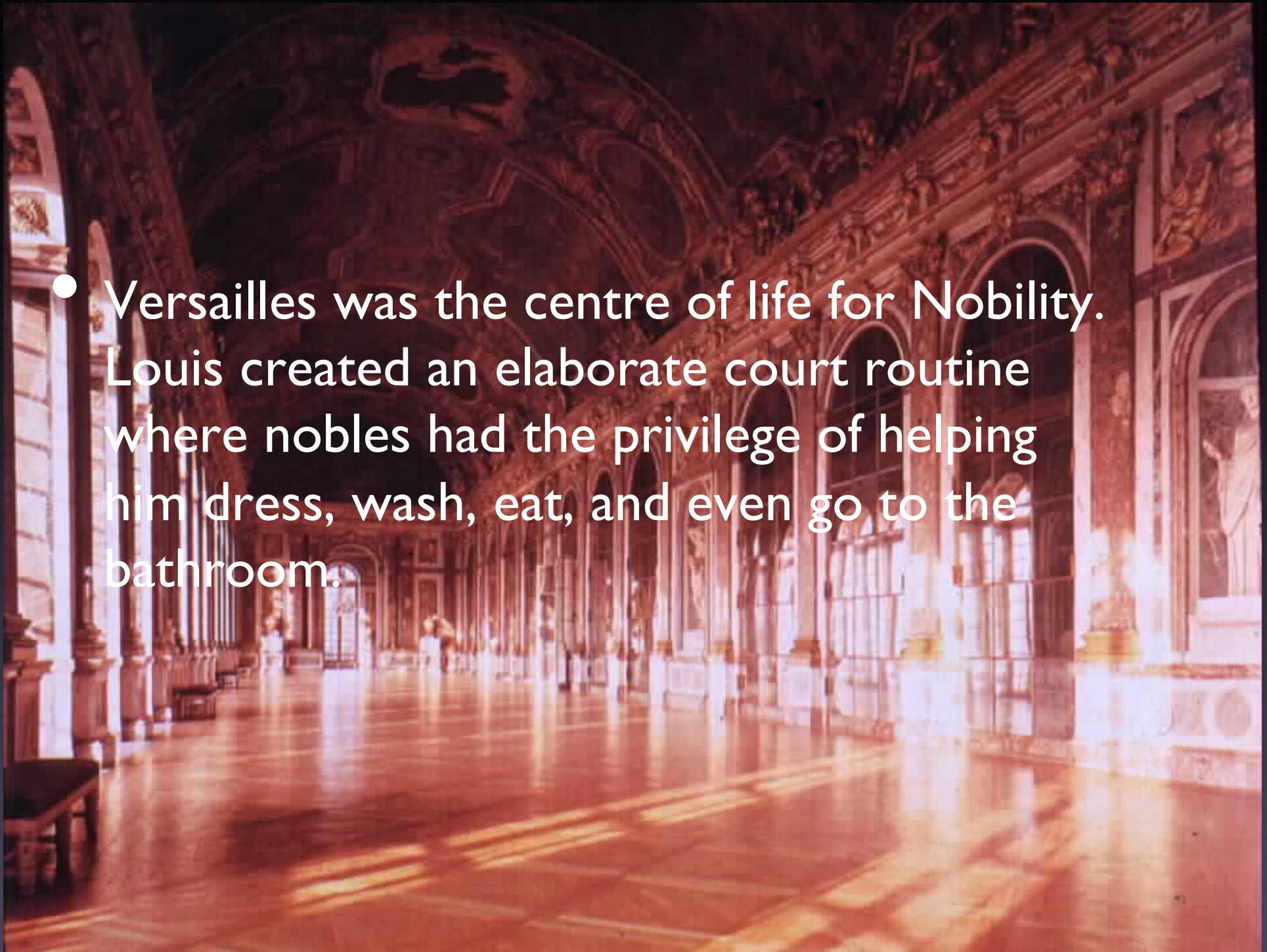


- Louis built probably the most magnificent palace ever built in Europe--Versailles. It cost 600 million livres and over 35, 000 people working for decades to complete it. He was still adding to it at his death

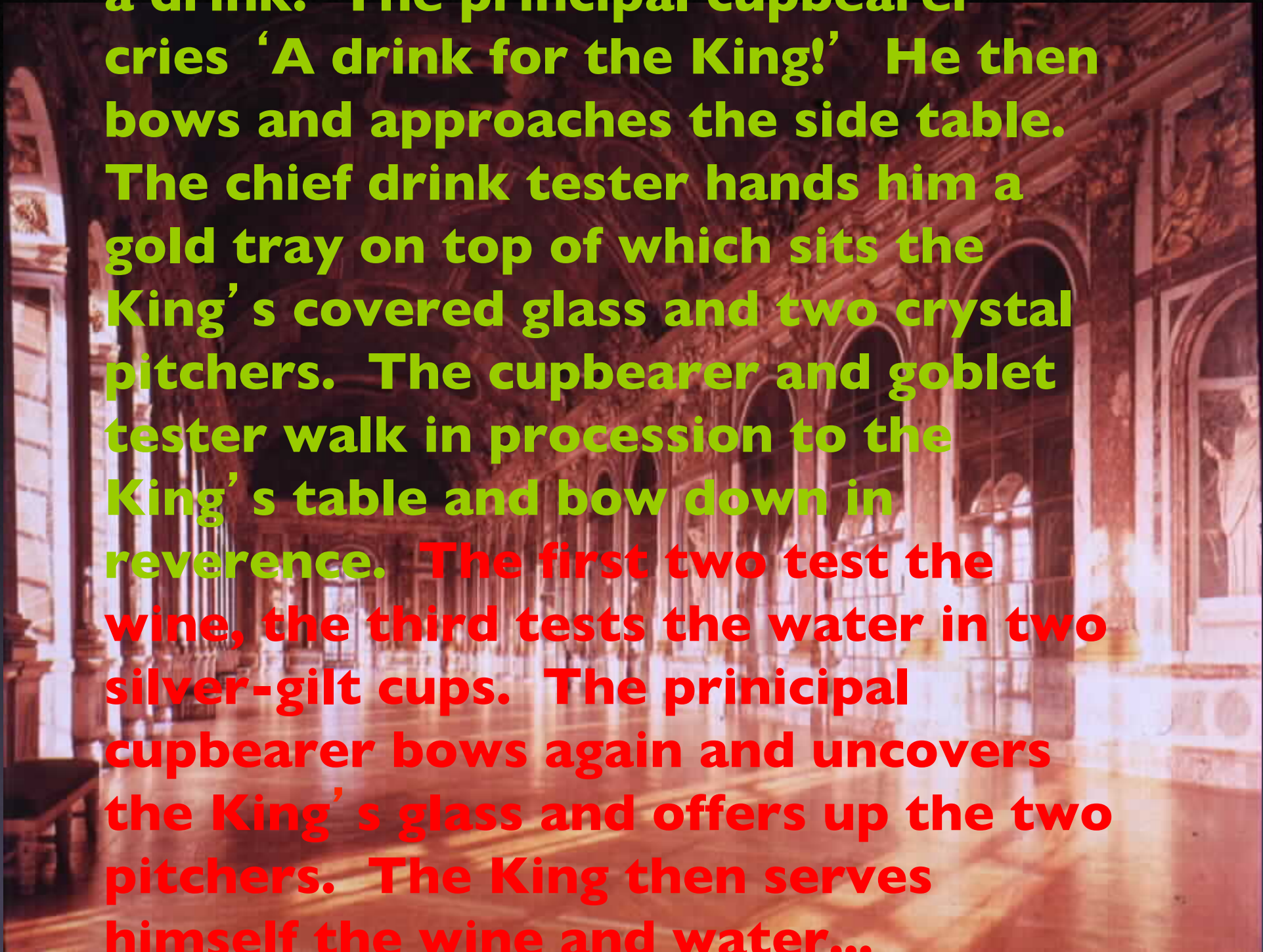


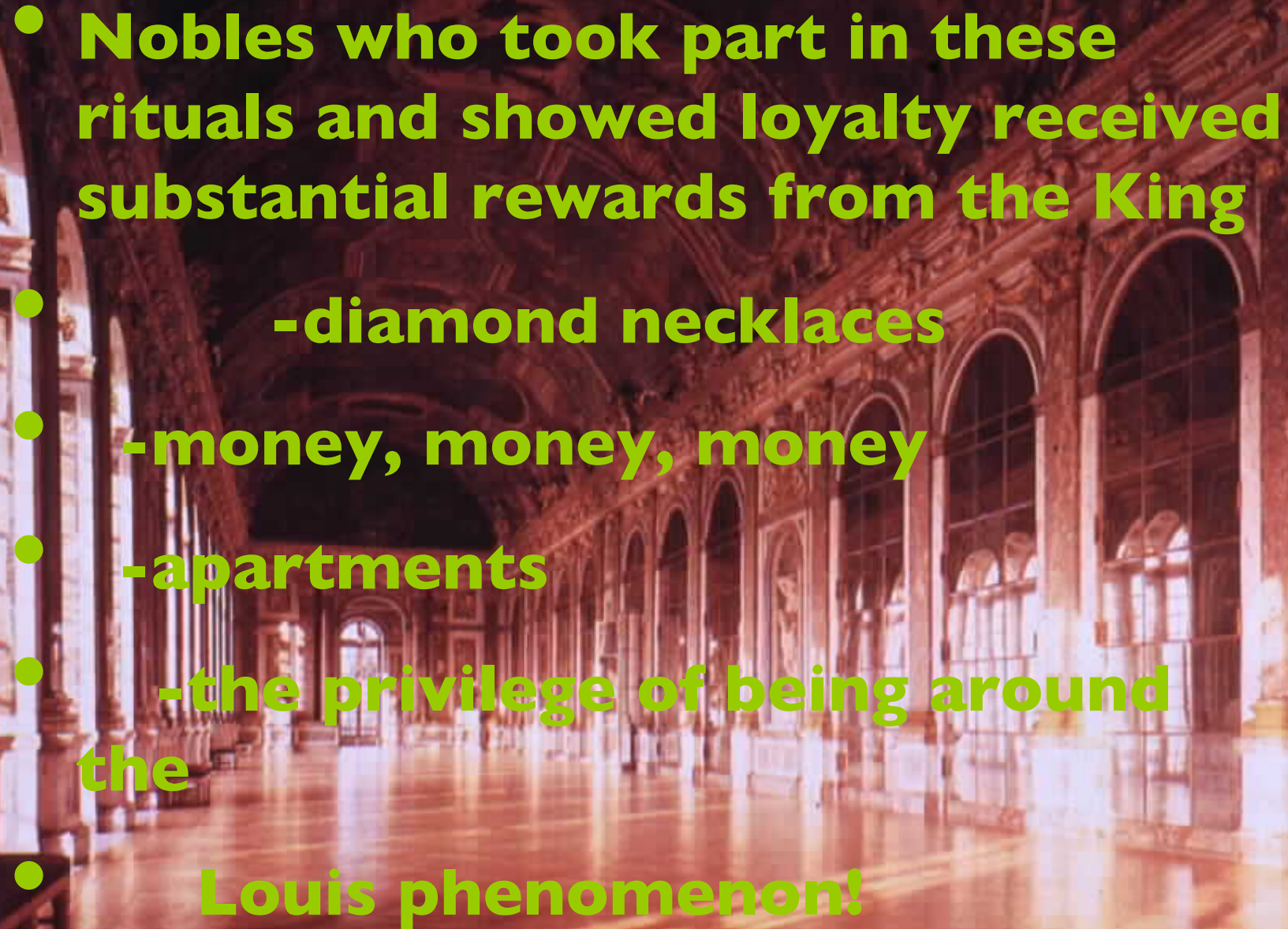


- Versailles was the centre of life for Nobility. Louis created an elaborate court routine where nobles had the privilege of helping him dress, wash, eat, and even go to the bathroom.



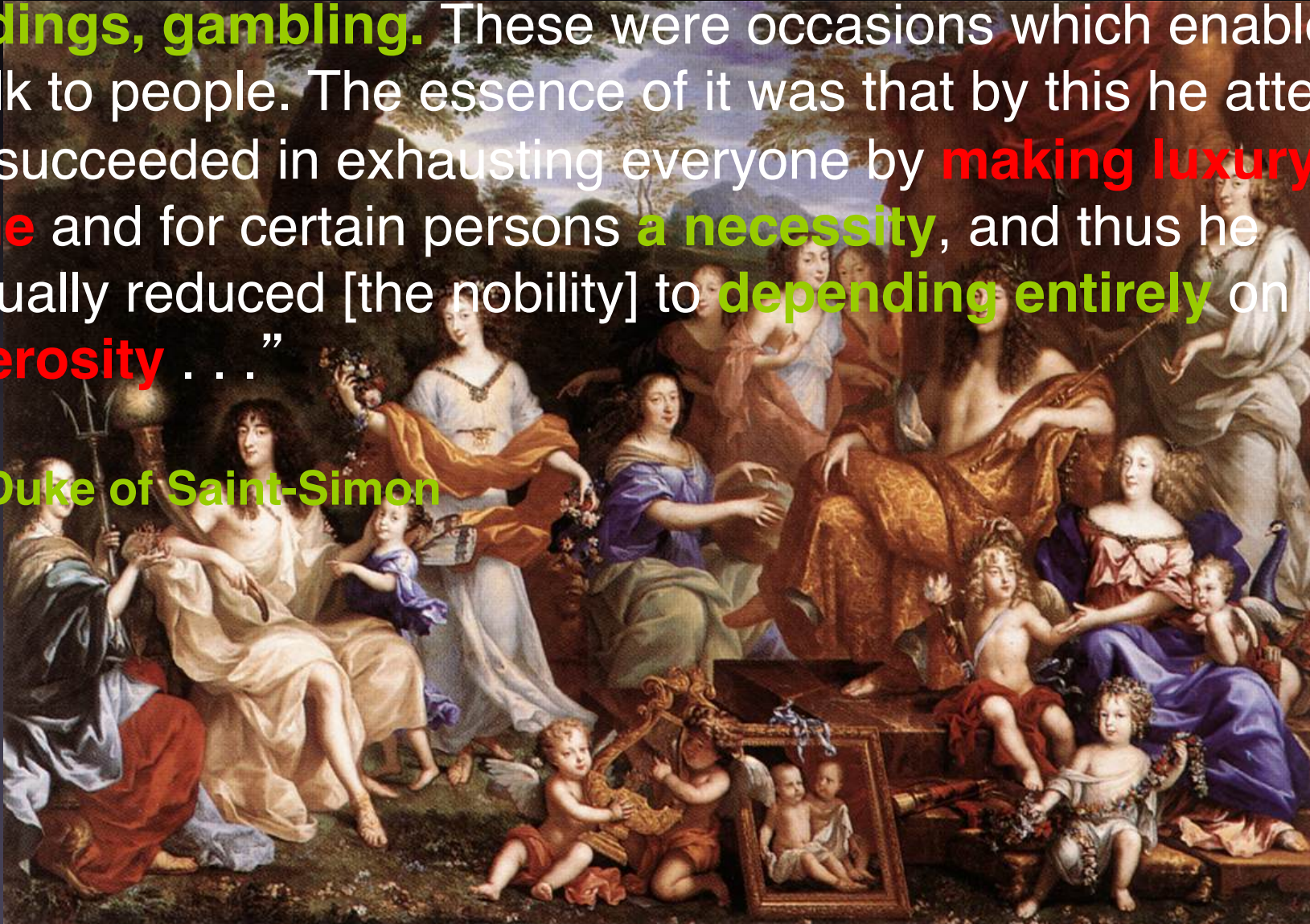
When the King is thirsty, he asks for a drink. The principal cupbearer cries 'A drink for the King!' He then bows and approaches the side table. The chief drink tester hands him a gold tray on top of which sits the King's covered glass and two crystal pitchers. The cupbearer and goblet tester walk in procession to the King's table and bow down in reverence. The first two test the wine, the third tests the water in two silver-gilt cups. The principal cupbearer bows again and uncovers the King's glass and offers up the two pitchers. The King then serves himself the wine and water...



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- Nobles who took part in these rituals and showed loyalty received substantial rewards from the King
 - -diamond necklaces
 - -money, money, money
 - -apartments
 - -the privilege of being around the
 - Louis phenomenon!

“In everything [Louis XIV] loved **splendor, magnificence**, profusion. He turned his taste into a maxim for political reasons and instilled it into his court on all matters. One could **please him** by **throwing oneself into fine food, clothes, retinue, buildings, gambling**. These were occasions which enabled him to talk to people. The essence of it was that by this he attempted and succeeded in exhausting everyone by **making luxury a virtue** and for certain persons **a necessity**, and thus he gradually reduced [the nobility] to **depending entirely** on his **generosity** . . . ”

The Duke of Saint-Simon



Louis also had an extensive **spy network** and knew the **secrets** of almost every prominent noble. In this way he was able to totally dominate his kingdom throughout his life

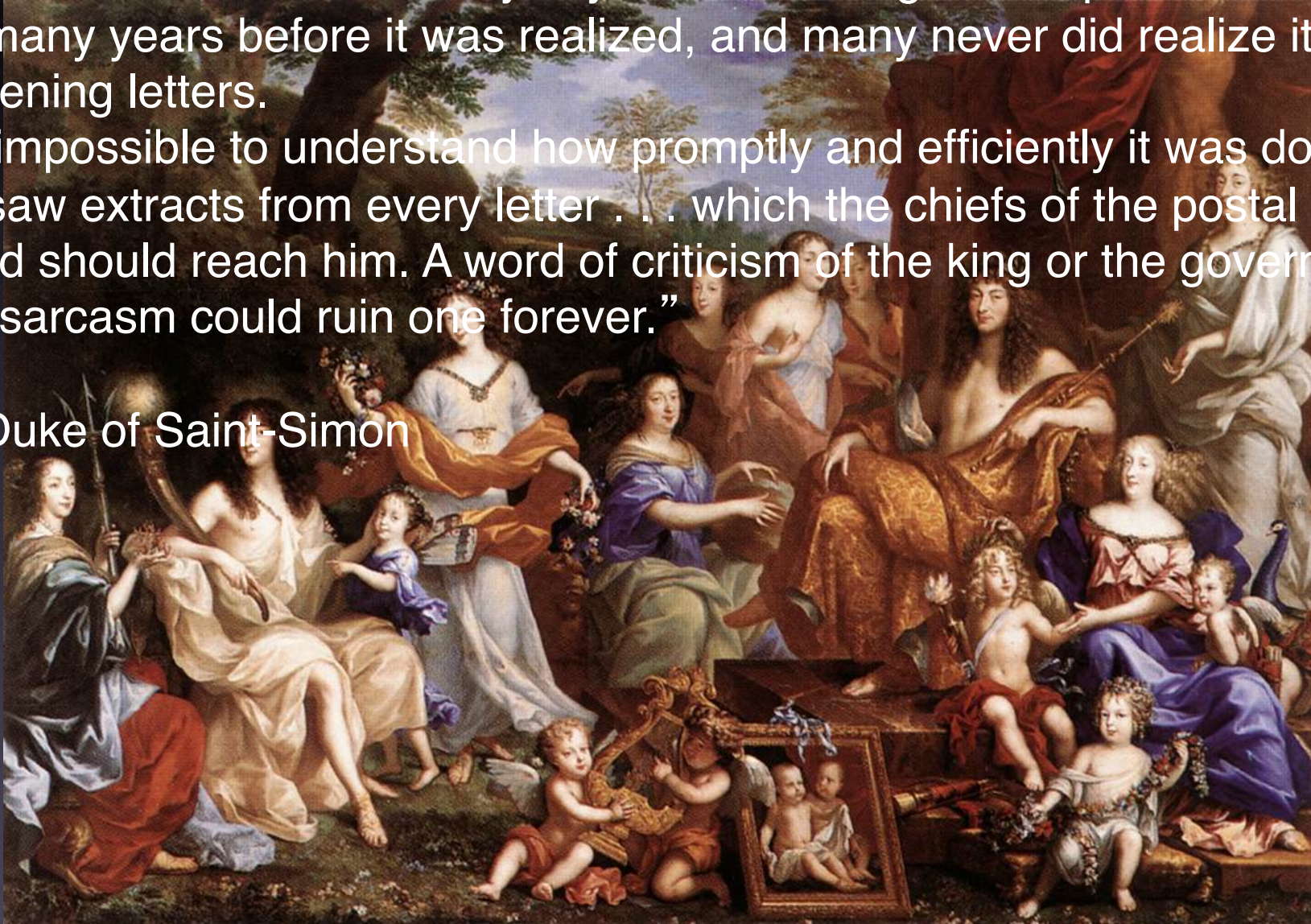


“Louis XIV took very special to be informed about everything that was going on . . . in public and in private. He had an infinity of spies . . . of every kind. Some were ignorant of the fact that their relations went all the way to him, others knew it.

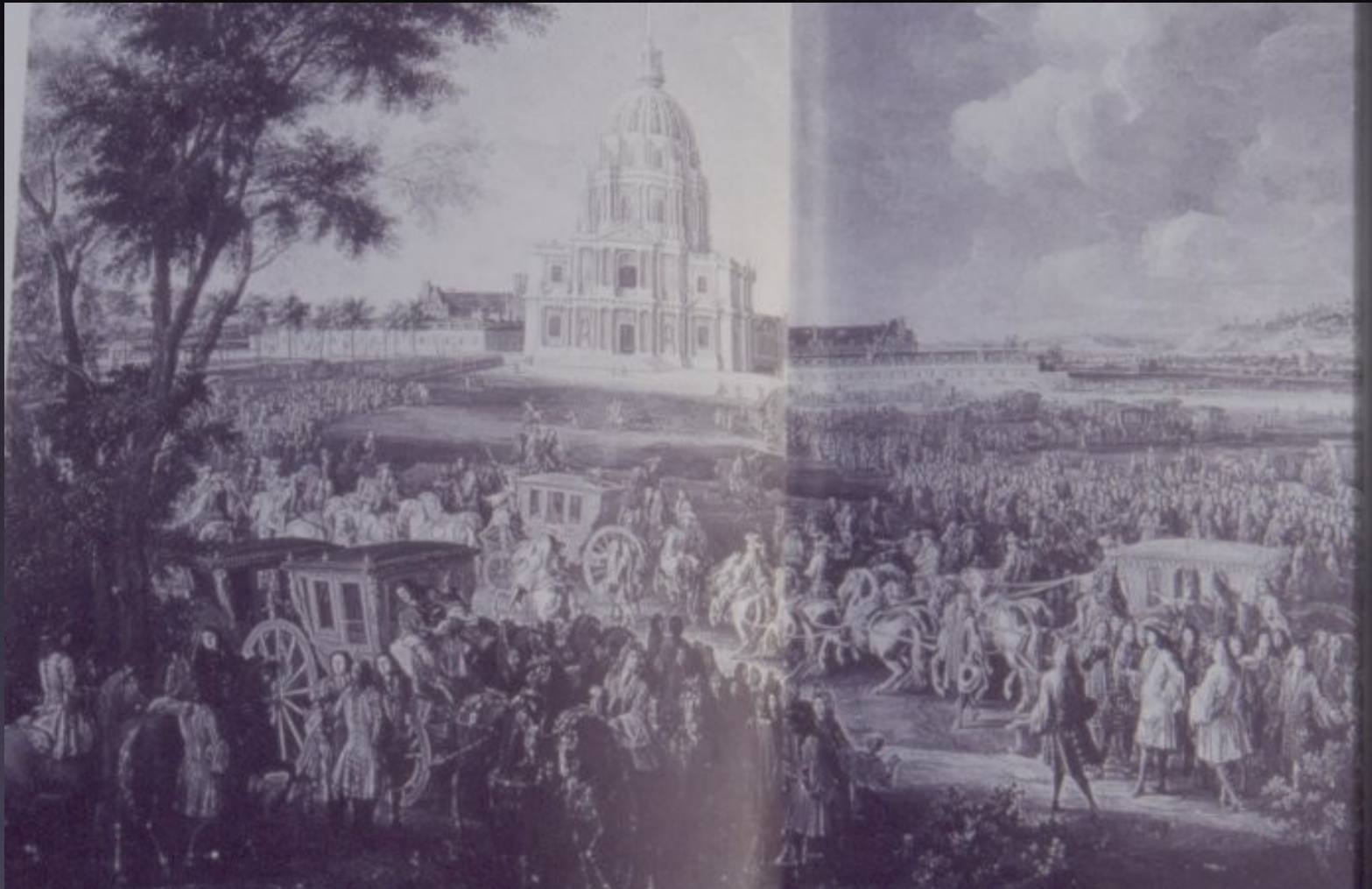
“But the cruelest of all the ways by which the king was kept informed, and it was many years before it was realized, and many never did realize it . . . was by opening letters.

“It is impossible to understand how promptly and efficiently it was done. The king saw extracts from every letter . . . which the chiefs of the postal service judged should reach him. A word of criticism of the king or the government, a bit of sarcasm could ruin one forever.”

The Duke of Saint-Simon



His lavish spending and **love of war**--especially against **Protestants**--brought France to the brink of **Bankruptcy** by the time he died



When he died, no one could really take his place as ruler. **Nobles and King** were so closely aligned that by the time of the Revolution, both were **despised equally**

